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Apr.l 30, 2003 LB 412

Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund for public healthcare grants. The intent is to take the \$5 million that we had in this that we were providing grants for and those dollars be used to fund the S-CHIP program, the Children's Health Insurance Program, our portion with the federal participation. So the bill defunds any new public health grants under this section, but retains the statutory program and the infrastructure for such grants in the eventual future that we have dollars again within the program so that we continue the grant program. I might say that it has been a very successful program in the past, but also the CHIP program is very needed. It's providing healthcare insurance, or an insurance program anyway, for many children in this state. And so it's a matter of taking these dollars out of that tobacco settlement fund in that grant program and defunding that so that those dollars then can be available to fund the CHIP program. That's what the bill does. I would just ask for its approval.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Jensen. You've heard the opening on advancement of LB 412 by Senator Jensen. On with discussion. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. I stand in favor of LB 412. I would just like to have a short dialogue with Senator Jersen, so that we have some intent on the record, if Senator Jersen would yield.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Jensen, would you respond to Senator Byars?

SENATOR JENSEN: Yes, be glad to.

SENATOR BYARS: Senator Jensen, I just wanted your affirmation. As you and I have discussed off the floor on the record that as these dollars have been used for grants and have gone to so many worthwhile public health projects that it certainly is the intention, at least of you and I, and I can't speak for the entire Health Committee, but it is our intention as economic times get better hopefully we're going to have the dollars available that we will be able to take these dollars back into this grant program and be able to use them for worthwhile public health projects, and that certainly is my intent and I think it